

OX CART file

24 AUG 1964

Honorable Cyrus A. Vance
Deputy Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Vance:

In accordance with your suggestion to the Director, we have explored the possibility of using an OXCART vehicle in speed trials to break the world's speed record. We have made this study with the understanding that we should protect the covert aspects of the OXCART project as well as maintaining security of the sensitive characteristics of this type aircraft.

In examining what has to be done in order to establish a world speed record, we have found that the requirements for certifying such a record are as follows:

a. The speed trials must be conducted by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) (in Paris), working through the U. S. National Aeronautic Association (NAA).

b. It is possible (more likely probable) that foreign nationals would insist on taking part in such a test.

c. The FAI/NAA representatives must:

1. Inspect the aircraft on behalf of the FAI and report to them.

2. Certify the takeoff and landing.

3. Validate the photo panel and/or barograph installation used for test purposes.

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4. Certify positive radar and optical tracking during the test runs.

In view of the foregoing, there appears little likelihood of our protecting the security of OXCART as an operational vehicle.

Other factors which have a bearing on this problem are as follows:

a. OXCART #121 is the only vehicle that has been operating at the high speeds required for a world's speed record.

b. Using OXCART #121 for the speed trials would eliminate that vehicle from our flight test program for an estimated three or four weeks, which would represent ten to twelve lost flight tests.

c. OXCART #121 is a unique aircraft in terms of its test instrumentation and is invaluable in its auxiliary reliability and repeatability support role in qualifying the operational vehicles for sustained Mach 2.8 flight and the eventual 3.2 capability.

d. If we were to enter one of the genuine OXCART aircraft in a speed run, it would be easily recognized as distinct from and as additional to the three aircraft now at Edwards, and the whole question of its source and companions would then arise.

If we are to meet our primary objective of establishing the OXCART operational reconnaissance capability at Mach 2.8 (MELARK) at the earliest date practicable and certainly by early November, we conclude that it would not be wise to attempt to use an OXCART vehicle for world speed trials at this time.

Signature recommended:

Faithfully yours,

for
RM/SM

Distribution:

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(Signed), Marshall S. Carter

Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA
Acting Director

DDCI/MSCarter/bb